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*Sydenham; or Memoirs of a Man of the World.* 3 vols. 8vo.—Colburn and Bentley.

WERE we anxious to commence our review of *Sydenham* with a smart saying, we should describe this Novel as a very clever and contemptible production. But smart sayings are seldom strictly true, and still more seldom useful or becoming, we shall, therefore, adopt a more suitable, and, we trust, more beneficial method, of making our readers acquainted with our opinion of the book. In the first place, then, there is no story; the beginning, the middle, and the end required by Aristotle, are all wanting; the book consists of a series of sketches of character and of society. Secondly, Sir Matthew Sydenham, the principal actor, and narrator, is professedly a heartless, selfish satirist, who deems himself at full liberty, on all occasions, to sport with and wound the feelings of all other persons, without the least remorse, and who, indeed, continually plumes himself on the skill with which he is able to contribute to his own amusement, by torturing, as far as in him lies, the minds of the various persons with whom he happens to be in any way connected or acquainted. He also selects his father and his mother, as persons whose characters are proper to be held up to the especial scorn and derision of his readers.

We have detected and detested these revolting characteristics in many popular modern novels.—Vivian Grey, for example, Granby, Pelham, et multis aliis. The danger is great that public taste and public morals may be thereby vitiated, so far as the influence of such works extend. Raw inexperienced young men, readily take up the opinion that it is very fashionable and knowing, and 'quite correct,' to get rid of all the warm and kind and good emotions of the heart, and to substitute in their stead, a cold, stony, sneering indifference, to all persons matters and things, that do not centre in the amusement or glorification of their noble selves, and pitiable puppyism or degrading worldly-mindedness is elevated into the place which ought to be occupied by exalted virtue, or at least by pure benevolence, and is made the model,

— The glass indeed,  
In which each noble youth should dress himself.

Bad as the world is, and we are far from thinking well of it, things are not yet quite come to the pass which this supposes, and those who exhibit their talents only in the infliction of pain, or the affectation of indifference, will readily find themselves slighted and despised, by those by whom they had hoped their cleverness would make them only feared and hated. It is more particularly to the first volume of *Sydenham* that these observations apply: in it the author confines himself chiefly to the world of fashion, and beau Brummel is for the thousand and first time caricatured, under the name of Beaumont. Several of the well-known, and really piquant anecdotes of the exquisite, are grievously spoiled by the way of disguising them, and considerably more of character is attributed to him, than he really possessed. Character in a man whose soul was in his coat and his cravat, is among the impossible quantities of the mathematicians. The concluding volumes, from the time that *Sydenham* gets into parliament, are exclusively devoted to celebrated political characters, who will be easily recognized by every reader. We are inclined to agree with our author in the opinion that

the most independent man in the House of Commons, is the representative of a rotten borough.

*Sydenham* joins the whig party, chiefly, he tells us, for the sake of the society at Brookes' and elsewhere. As usual, however, he makes a point of showing up his intimates in the most unamiable light he can, and the portraits of the whig leaders are any thing but captivating. After a great deal of cabal and intrigue, in which Mr. Brougham, under the name of Broughton, is very severely and unfairly handled, he, with several others, of whom Sheridan (called in the book Singleton,) is one, are represented as deserting their party, and forming a coalition with the moderate tories. We shall give *Sydenham's* interview with Sheridan, when first he met him after this supposed coalition, and a subsequent one with Cobbett, as a specimen of the author's powers.

"One day, in the latter part of the week, as I was walking down one of the streets leading from Piccadilly toward Pall-Mall, I espied Singleton a few yards before me. I quickened my step, overtook him, and laid my hand upon his arm. He turned round, started, stammered, and was evidently as much annoyed at the sight of me, as he would have been had the Devil or a bailiff stopped him.

"Ah, Syd, my boy! How are you? I'm delighted to see you—where have you been this long time?"

"This long time! Why, I think you have seen me at Dick Lutwyche's and at Brookes's within this week."

"Ay, true! I forgot," cried Will, not yet recovered from his confusion. "Which way are you going?"

"Your way," answered I, and I thrust my arm within his to make sure of the slippery dog. We walked on a few paces in silence. I was the first to speak.

"Well, Singleton, I can't congratulate you upon your new alliance."

"Come, Syd, you are not a man to adopt the common cant upon these matters," answered Singleton, whose wit generally opened a door of escape to him from every dilemma: "You must feel as well as I do, that in politics our desires naturally tend to office; and surely you can't think it very inexcusable for a person with my accomplishments to yield to the temptation?"

"I think," replied I, "that after you have preserved your virtue so long, it is a pity you should now sacrifice it, and that, too, for an office of inferior rank."

"Between ourselves, Syd," rejoined Will, "my case is like that of a young lady, who, when she first comes out, thinking that her perfections will enable her to take her choice of mankind, refuses many good offers, but at length, finding herself upon the wane, and the expected proposal not yet made, is content to lower her price as her attractions fade, and to dispose of herself before they become utterly unmarketable."

"Your comparison won't do," said I; "for you have been long united to a most respectable party, and the connexion which you have lately formed, though it may be more agreeable than the barrenness of your legitimate marriage, is nevertheless a *faux pas*, from which, believe me, your reputation will never recover."

"I never pretended to 'outrageous virtue,'" answered Singleton; "and I have only done

what hundreds have done before me, and will do after me."

"Be that as it may, your act has divorced you for ever from the Whig body."

"Has it?" cried Singleton, bitterly; "I fancy, however, it will feel the deprivation of such a rib as me."

"This is a delicate subject," I observed, "which it appears to me that we have been treating in rather an indelicate manner. We will dismiss it, and in doing so, suffer me to express my sincere hope," and I uttered these last words with an impressive tone and manner, "that you may never feel remorse for having abandoned, and thereby materially injured, that party with which you have so long been united, and which, notwithstanding all your faults, esteemed and admired you; and that he to whom you have committed yourself may not, when you have answered his purpose and ceased to be useful to him,

"Whistle you down the wind,  
A prey to Fortune,"

when your talents will only suffice to mingle a few grains of pity with the general reprobation which awaits the adversity of the public and private profligate!"

"So saying, I abruptly quitted him, and turned down an adjoining street. When I had gone forward a few yards, I looked behind and saw Singleton still standing where I had left him; but, observing that I watched him, he started from his reverie, and hurried forward.

"On the morning after this conversation with Singleton, I was favoured with a visit from a very extraordinary person, of whom I must give some account before I bring him in *propria persona* before the reader.

"While the pit and boxes of the political theatre were interested and amused by the representations of the regular actors, the raff of the shilling gallery has usually been entertained by buffoons, whose performances were more suitable to their less refined apprehension. C— had been for many years the capital jack-pudding of this class of spectators. The man was not destitute of abilities, but was the most coarse, violent, profligate, and intolerable of human creatures. Let the reader conceive, if possible, the idea of a wild beast endowed with intellect, which directed, but did not subdue his savage and treacherous nature, and it will be the nearest illustration that I can give him of C—'s character. When he first appeared in public, an eminent Whig, finding him to be a powerful animal, and thinking that he might be made an useful one, endeavoured to put him into training for that purpose; but the brute proved utterly untractable, and his ferocious propensities first broke forth in an attack upon his benefactor, who was obliged to get rid of him as quickly as possible. Principles C— had none; and his opinions he changed, perhaps, about as frequently as he did his linen. He was chiefly governed by rage, malice, and money, and accordingly as those motives actuated him, he wrote, wholly independent of what he had formerly asserted. Altogether, it was a moral monster, which one would have been curious to examine, if one could have overcome the disgust which the contemplation of it inspired.

"I was rather surprised, then, upon being informed that this man waited below requesting to speak to me. I desired, however, that he should be admitted, to the scarcely concealed surprise of the supercilious footman. Accord-

ingly, C—— was ushered into the room where I was sitting. His person and manners, I should observe, were an admixture of country clown and city blackguard, in nearly equal proportions.

'Pray, Sir,' said I, as he entered the room, 'what is your business with me?'

'Sir,' answered the fellow, 'I come as one of the people to speak to you as a representative of the people, and I hope I've at least as much right to do so as a lord has to demand an audience of the king.'

'I'm quite ready to admit your claim in that character, and to hear what you have to say.'

'I'm not apt to praise public men,' cried C——, throwing himself into a chair, 'because in general they're a set of rascals, and bullying beastly blackguards, who feed themselves and their ravenous relatives out of the very heart and guts of the country; but when I see a man do his duty, I'm as willing to praise him, as I am to lash him if he neglects it.'

'He paused, and I, suspecting the tendency of this preliminary observation, merely made an inclination of my head, and he proceeded.'

'Now, I approve of your conduct, and I think it right to tell you so. I honour you for the dressing you gave that shuffling, sneering, Scotch, damned, dunghill son of a b—— Broughton. I honour you for not joining that fellow Tewkesbury, and that swindler Singleton, whose wife had a child by Chepstow's long-legged son, and that old master-pick-pocket Lessingham, and all the rest of the rapscallion Whigs.'

'Flattering as your commendations may be, Mr. C——,' said I, 'I presume that you did not take the trouble of coming to my house for the express purpose of bringing them to me. Be so good, therefore, as to proceed to the point.'

'I will—I will, Sir Matthew; I'm a plain, straightforward, honest Englishman, who never uses roundabout words, and speaks out fearlessly upon every occasion, as you know. Now, you've been scurvily, and basely, and infamously gulled by those Whigs—I mean lawyer Broughton's Whigs.'

'He stopped again; I signified to him to proceed.'

'Very well. Admitting this, I've a proposal to make—a proposal to make. You'd like to have these fellows shown up; I'm a blunt man, and hate humbug; lend me a couple of hundreds, and I'll show them up in grand style for you, and be the making of yourself into the bargain. What do you say to it?'

'Have you any thing farther to propose to me on this or any other point?'

'Nothing,' answered the demagogue.

'I then addressed him in the following terms:—'

'Impudent scoundrel! How dare you insult a gentleman with your praise, and menace him with your support? If you attempt to put your threat into execution, I will have you scourged for your insolence; but if between this and your next publication you should think better of it, and abuse me with all your might, I will give you a guinea for the service which you will thereby render me. In the mean time, vanish from my presence! If you do not immediately make your exit by the door, I will show you a short cut out at the window. And mind, you rascal! that you lay your hand upon nothing in

going out of the house, for you will be watched and detected.'

'A painter only could describe the effect which this speech produced upon the old wretch. He started up, stamped upon the floor, glared at me with the expression of an incarnate fiend, foamed at the mouth, attempted to speak, but was dumb with rage, gnashed his teeth, shook his clenched fist at me, and darted out of the room.'

'In his next paper, the Tewkesbury Ministry and the Broughton Whigs were highly praised, while the Opposition Rump was vilified; I myself being treated with an extraordinary portion of his most potent abuse.'

We confess we think the reply to the radical, savours somewhat too much of Billingsgate for an exclusive.

Some of the after-dinner scenes, too, especially the night-visit with Singleton, and the tete-a-tete with the young Oxonian toad-eater, we should consider grossly indelicate, and unfit to be written by a gentleman or read by a lady. The author has undoubtedly the ability to write a far superior book to Sydenham, if he would exert his powers in a better cause, and qualify his satire with some shew of good feeling, or better still, of good principle.

*The Cabinet Cyclopædia. Domestic Economy, Vol. 1. By Michael Donovan, Esq. M.R.I.A. Professor of Chemistry to the Company of Apothecaries in Ireland.—London: Longman, Rees, Orme, Brown and Green.*

THIS volume treats of brewing, distilling, wine-making and all manner of intoxicating liquors. The making of vinegar and the baking of bread are also included in it, as indeed are all those processes in domestic economy which depend upon, or are connected with, fermentation. A great deal of research is evinced in tracing the origin of the various manufactured liquids employed for domestic purposes, the general contents of the volume, however, are not of a nature to interest the general reader very strongly, as they relate so exclusively to operations in which none but those who are practically conversant with them, seem to concern themselves much. We shall extract the passage, in which the claim of Ireland to priority in the art of making malt spirits is vindicated, and shall subjoin Mr. Donovan's strictures on the fatal results of immoderate indulgence in the use of spirituous liquors, that we may lend our aid to the Temperance Society in disseminating information on this important subject.

'At what period the art of distillation was introduced into Britain is not certainly known: it is commonly believed to have taken place during the reign of Henry II. It would appear that in Ireland the practice of obtaining a spirit from malt was better understood, even at the earliest period of the invention, than elsewhere. In the Irish language the spirit was called *Uisge-beatha* or *Usquebakh*. Moryson, who was secretary to Lord Mountjoy, during the rebellion in Ireland of the Earl of Tyrone, wrote a history of Ireland, including the period between 1599 and 1603, which in many respects is one of the grossest libels that ever defiled the page of history; in this he nevertheless gives the following account:—'At Dublin, and in some other cities (of Ireland,) they have taverns, wherein Spanish and French wines are sold; but more commonly the merchants sell them by pints and quarts in their own

cellars. The Irish aqua vitæ, vulgarly called usquebakh, is held the best in the world of that kind, which is made also in England, but nothing so good as that which is brought out of Ireland. And the usquebakh is preferred before our aqua vitæ, because the mingling of raisins, fennel-seed, and other things, mitigating the heat, and making the taste pleasant, makes it less inflame, and yet refresh the weak stomach with moderate heat and good relish. These drinks the English-Irish drink largely, and in many families (especially at feasts) both men and women use excess therein:—neither have they any beer made of malt and hops, nor yet any ale; no, not the chief lords, except it be very rarely.'—But when they come to any market-town to sell a car or horse, they never return home until they have drunk the price in Spanish wine (which they call the King of Spain's daughter,) or in Irish Usquebakh, and until they have outslept two or three day's drunkenness.' The latter passages prove how little this writer was disposed to praise any thing Irish, had praise been undeserved.

'Sir James Ware supposes that ardent spirit was distilled in Ireland earlier than in England. He says, 'the English aqua vitæ, it is thought, is the invention of more modern times. Yet we find the virtues of usquebakh and a receipt for making it, both simple and compound, in the red book of Ossory, compiled nearly two hundred years ago; and another receipt for making a liquor, then called *nectar*, made of a mixture of honey and wine, to which are added ginger, pepper, cinnamon, and other ingredients.' Dr. Ledwich observes, that the early French poets speak of this nectar with rapture, as being most delicious. The Irish distilled spirits from malt in 1590, and imitated foreign *liqueurs*, by adding aromatic seeds and spices, as was practised in France, so early, according to le Grand, as 1313. The Irish *bulcaan*, Rutty tells us, was made from black oats. *Buile*, madness, and *ceann*, the head, intimate the effects of this fiery spirit.

'Having now sketched an account of the introduction and use of intoxicating liquors, as far as the few annals preserved have furnished materials for it, as a proper sequel we may notice the consequences of indulgence in these insidious poisons. Fortunate, indeed, were it for mankind, if the history could truly terminate with an account of their introduction, and if there were nothing to be added to complete the subject. But a dismal picture remains to be exhibited of the effects of excessive indulgence. It is the more to be lamented that the power which those stimuli possess over the intellectual economy should be turned to such bad account, when, under proper restrictions, they might have been made conducive to real benefits. From them, rightly administered, the afflicted in mind or body might receive comfort, the desponding might be inspired with hope, and the melancholy elevated into joy. But the limits of moderation are easily surpassed. He who experiences these advantages does not always rest satisfied with their reasonable enjoyment: the cup of bliss continues to be quaffed, but the infused poison throws round him its magic spell. His senses no longer convey true impressions. Innocent hilarity gives place to mischievous mirth: good humour and benevolence are converted into causeless quarrel and vindictive rage: the faculties of the man are only recognisable by their perversion: and fortunate for him is it if